

**REMARKS**

**INTRODUCTION:**

This preliminary amendment is being filed in order to improve the form of the above referenced application. Claims 8, 9 and 16 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

No new matter is included in this amendment.

It is noted that claims 8, 9 and 16 have been filed as a continuation application with the attorney docket number 1293.1721C1.

**CONCLUSION:**

There being no outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited. Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters. If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

STEIN, MCEWEN & BUI, LLP

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

5/12/06

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Michael D. Stein  
Registration No. 37,240

1400 Eye St., NW  
Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Telephone: (202) 216-9505  
Facsimile: (202) 216-9510